6/17/98

Approved For Release 2005/06/29 : CIA-RDP65B00383R000200170029-3

Legislative counsel
7D01.

SEP 23 1963

THE EVENING STAR A-11
Washington, D. C., Monday, September 23, 1963

MAX FREEDMAN

CIA's Blunders in Viet Nam

Developments Show Folly of Letting Intelligence Agency Establish Policies

As the war in Viet Nam has continued, the struggle in Washington between rival groups inside the administration has grown in bitterness and intensity. There have been angry mutterings of resignation—not carried out in practice—and high words about drift and danger. Part of the tension has been caused by clashes in temperament but the central problem arises from differences over public policy.

By the middle of April, or even a few days earlier, it seemed clear to a few discerning officials in the State Department that the military struggle had begun to turn slowly yet decisively against the Communist forces.

This basic military fact has been obscured by the later political storms but the available evidence confirms this trend. Only about 10 per cent of the Communist forces, which number somewhat less than 25,000 men, comes from outside Viet Nam.

This background deserves considerable emphasis for it shows that the Defense Department and the Central Intelligence Agency are entitled to praise for this limited achievement. As the weeks dragged on, however, it became painfully evident that both of them were guilty of shambling inaccuracies in reading the political situation in Viet Nam.

When the debate behind the scenes is made public years from now, no one will be able to deny that the State Department, on the basis of papers and recommendations written at the time and not with the wisdom of hindsight, had a far greater insight into the true situation in Viet Nam than any other agency in the American government. Yet the State Department has faced a desperate and wearing struggle to get its view embodied in American policy.

If the final result in Viet Nam should be a defeat for the cause supported by American arms and American money, there will be a rush in this country to place the blame on the most vulnerable scapegoats. What is an easier target than the State Department?

It will be said that the State Department lost South Viet Nam just as it once lost China. That charge is wrong about China, and it certainly never can be true about Viet Nam.

The record will show that the State Department from the very beginning saw the tragic significance of the Diem government's attack on the students. It understood the moral decay and political cruelty that prompted the campaign against the Buddhists. It regretted the timid, blundering and inconsistent appeal made to the army in Viet Nam to assert its independence.

It argues now that if it is hard to find an alternative to the Diem group, the blame rests in no small part on the unfortunate alliance between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department, with its disastrous impact in recent weeks on American policy.

In this distribution of blame, the heaviest burden falls on the CIA. The officials making these criticisms are not vindictive, nor do they have any desire to stir up a row inside the administration.

With the evidence in their hands of the incredible and garish blunders committed in a sickening sequence by the CIA, these men in the State Department would be false to their trust if they remained silent while omens of disaster steadily accumulated.

The wretched muddle in Viet Nam shows the folly and the danger of allowing the CIA to be a primary force in the development of American policy. The CIA should be an instrument for carrying out an agreed policy; it should never be the architect of policy.

Two further points should be made:

First, Ambassador Lodge, by consent of those best able to judge, is doing a first-rate job in very hard conditions.

Secondly, the action of Senator Church and some 30 other Senators in threatening to cut off aid is designed to strengthen President Kennedy in his dealings with the Diem government. It arms President Kennedy with a lever against that government if it resists necessary reforms in Viet Nam or if it flirts with a danger of neutrality.

propriations Committee has some sort of check on the CIA. There are members of the Appropriations Committee who tell me that is not a check of any substance.

I repeat: The Congress is dodging its responsibilities in respect to the CIA. The Congress owes to the American people the placing of a clear legislative check on the CIA. The only way we can check it is to set up a congressional watchdog committee with authority and power to require from the CIA every bit of intelligence information the Congress thinks it ought to have in order to protect the operation of this system of government by checks and balances, because the alternative is the development of a creeping police state within the Government of the United States. That is developing. One cannot explain on governmental theory the unchecked power of the CIA except on the basis of the fact—and it is an ugly fact—that there is a creeping police state power developing within this democracy. It is a cancer which must be removed. The only way we can remove it is for the Congress to assume its clear constitutional duties as well as powers in respect to the CIA.

Mr. GRUENING. I could not agree more with my friend the senior Senator from Oregon. The CIA, operating in secret, as the Senator properly says, performing wholly contrary to our American traditions and our professions, is supposed to be a fact-finding Agency. It has been notably unsuccessful as a fact-finding Agency. It was wrong on Cuba. It misled us grieviously with the result that Cuba has Castro and his Communist tyranny. It certainly contributed to the Bay of Pigs fiasco. It was apparently wrong on Honduras. Only 24 hours before the revolt the State Department let it be known—and presumably the State Department had access to the CIA's information—that no revolt was coming. Yet it "popped."

In addition to that, we know the CIA is far more than a fact-finding Agency. An article in the New Republic, a responsible publication, about a year ago, stated flatly that the CIA was responsible for an assassination in a Caribbean country.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The 5 minutes for which the Senator was recognized have expired.

Mr. GRUENING. Mr. President, I shall take only 1 minute more.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, a parliamentary inquiry.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator will state it.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Is the Senate operating under controlled time?

The VICE PRESIDENT. It is. The Senator from Washington [Mr. MAGNUSON] yielded such time as he wished to the Senator from Alaska, within his time limitation.

Mr. GRUENING. I shall need only 1 minute more.

I do not know whether that charge was true. The mere fact that a responsible publication could make the charge that the CIA was responsible for the assassination of a political leader in a Caribbean republic should have been enough to bring about a congressional investigation and the kind of action I urge, which the Senator from Florida [Mr. SMATHERS] has proposed, and the senior Senator from Oregon [Mr. MORSE] so heartily and eloquently supports.

COMMITTEE MEETING DURING SENATE SESSION

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator from Washington yield for a minute?

Mr. MAGNUSON. I yield to the Senator from Montana.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Montana is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Reorganization and International Organizations of the Committee on Government Operations may be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate today.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. KEATING. Mr. President, will the Senator yield to me?

Mr. MAGNUSON. Mr. President, how much time have I under my control on the bill?

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Washington has 26 minutes.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. President, if it is inconvenient for the Senator to yield, I am authorized to use time on this side.

Mr. MAGNUSON. Why not use 5 minutes of the time under the control of the Senator from Delaware?

Mr. KEATING. Mr. President, I yield myself 5 minutes.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from New York yields himself 5 minutes.

Mr. LAUSCHE. Mr. President, how much time is there?

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Washington has 26 minutes. The Senator from New York yields himself 5 minutes. The Senator from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KEATING. I thank the Chair.

RADIO ASTRONOMY SERVICE

Mr. KEATING. Mr. President, last Friday the Federal Communications Commission completed action in a rule-making proceeding of widespread public interest involving the future of the radio astronomy service. The decision, I am heartened to report, has given channels [illegible] radio astronomy frequencies, would be reserved for the frequency allocation that would not be reserved for commercial purposes for a period of 10 years, that is, until at least January 1, 1974.

Mr. President, radio astronomy research is a vital part of our national scientific effort to uncover some of the dark secrets of outer space, with great present and potential practical value for the U.S. space program. Around the country, indeed around the world, both publicly and privately supported radio astronomy facilities have an [illegible] stake in an assured frequency which will be protected for a [illegible] from any and all [illegible] interference. Any proposal of the Government [illegible] would be extremely [illegible] in the future progress of [illegible] and utilization of the nearly [illegible] in facilities which has so far been made; and it may well be that the 10-year protection just ordered by the FCC will not prove to be a sufficient period of protection for the long-range nature of the program.

Nevertheless, the FCC is to be commended for its recognition of the broad public interest inherent in the radio astronomy service. I know that the institutions and scientists in New York State which now maintain radio astronomy facilities or which are planning to install them in the future, together with the thousands employed by them—to mention only several, Cornell University, the Harden Planetarium, and the Cornell Electric Co.—will welcome the FCC decision of last week.

It is my intention, however, to ask our scientific opinion in order to determine whether the action taken has indeed stayed short of fulfilling the permanent objectives of the program, and I will certainly want to make sure, if further protection should be necessary, that it will be afforded at the proper time.

KINGS COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE JEWISH WAR VETERANS

Mr. KEATING. Mr. President, each year the Kings County Council of the Jewish War Veterans [illegible] hospitalized veterans at [illegible]. For a day, the council provides entertainment and [illegible] for these veterans—many of whom rarely see the outside of hospital walls.

Mr. President, the Kings County Council of the Jewish War Veterans—in fact, all Americans—have not forgotten their obligation to their war veterans—those who have given so much to the cause of America and freedom. Because of our admiration for the activities of the Jewish War Veterans of America, I have introduced legislation in this Congress which would incorporate this organization. If enacted, this legislation would grant Federal recognition to this organization. It is my hope that my bill will be favorably acted upon in the near future.

Mr. President, I salute the Kings County Council of the Jewish War Veterans for brightening the lives of many of our hospitalized veterans. Their [illegible] which perhaps reveals the gratitude of the entire Nation [illegible]

SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Mr. KEATING. Mr. President, in an unprecedented move, [illegible], Ambassador to the United States, Tran Van Chieu, resigned the post he occupied to the political President Ngo Dinh Diem.

I talk [illegible] in the Recess on [illegible] Jack Lawrence [illegible] which appeared in the [illegible] Washington Post.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VIETNAM'S RESIGNED U.S. AMBASSADOR MOVES FOR MORAL REVOLT TO END CRISIS

(By Josh Lawrence)

In distant Saigon, where the dictators of Vietnam seem to treat the population, even the freedom of that nation, as hostages in their showdown with the United States over the regime's brutal suppression of Buddhist critics, strongman Ngo Dinh Nhu shrewdly gave orders to pull in the claws of his Nazi-like special forces and release the honor of imprisoned demonstrators.

At that approximate moment in Washington, Tran Van Chuong, President Ngo Dinh Diem's former envoy in the United States and father of Vietnam's beautiful [illegible] tongued "first lady," Madame Nhu, [illegible] my name with a [illegible] finger and added: "The dictators of Vietnam may be well-intentioned—at least President Ngo Dinh Diem may be—but they have the minds of medieval inquisitors."

(Rumors from there are reports that Vietnam Government is transferring gold out of the embattled country.)

That appraisal of the Ngo family by the author of a thundering resignation message that rocked the palace foundation at Saigon August 22 succinctly describes the dilemma the U.S. Government cautiously seeks to resolve, and the diminutive speaker may be the person upon the whole Administration is searching for in trying to weld together the many elements of the opposition should Diem and his brother doing the palace walls down upon themselves.

In an interview at a small house in Chevy Chase, Md., where he is going to live, Chuong listed the errors of the regime and gently stressed the alternatives, firmly removing himself from a starring role: "I have never been a candidate for power."

STRENGTHENS STRIKE

"The instability of the present regime is due to the fact that most freedom-loving Vietnamese have been forced into exile, or have been silenced or reduced to impotence in Vietnam," he said. "The alternatives are there, but they cannot reveal themselves in a country where there is no freedom of expression."

Chuong's resignation was not an abrupt decision. The raiding of the pagodas and the struggles against the bronze—priests—and nuns were final straws.

On the subject of his possible return to Vietnam: "I would be put in a gold cage, metaphorically, but bankrupt. If I go back I cannot believe that I would be harmed, but I would be cut off from the rest of the world. I will be more useful here. I am going to choose freedom and stay in the United States. The people of Vietnam would not understand if I did otherwise."

MOVES A MORAL MOVE

"I am absolutely sure," he told me. "that unless this regime absolutely changes, there is no possibility of victory, even the Communists at all. The recent events in Saigon are a revolt of the national conscience of the Vietnamese against injustice and oppression. This is much more a moral issue than a political issue. [illegible] I [illegible] with these words [illegible] the strength of these [illegible] the cause a chain of reactions [illegible] paralyze the Government."

It is this grave consequence [illegible] study administration [illegible] if it is inevitable, [illegible] strength of [illegible] [illegible]

If the United States [illegible] strong [illegible] it might [illegible] should Diem and [illegible] [illegible] Minister [illegible] the policy to be support [illegible] not the [illegible]

[illegible]

What we [illegible] [illegible] like that [illegible] [illegible] the loss of Vietnam, [illegible] [illegible] something like a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

This is Chuong's analysis of the situation:

"The situation seems very difficult, [illegible] almost insoluble, because the present dictators have direct control of all material forces in Vietnam. The police and the special forces that have been used to unit the population and to round up the leaders and students and most units of the army.

"A similar situation prevailed in Vietnam in 1945 when President Ngo Dinh Diem had against him all the material forces and behind him only the moral support of the Vietnamese people—because he represented at that time all that the Vietnamese wanted. That was, real national independence.

"It is conceivable, therefore, that similar moral forces eventually may triumph over the police and special forces of the present regime."

Chuong's personal aspirations are centered intensely about the United States. He says he had not the country he loves, but also about his first love—Vietnam. He speaks with pained voice of his [illegible] [illegible] living in Vietnam, [illegible] his daughter, [illegible] his long career [illegible] or ambassador, [illegible] a jurist with service on the Permanent Court of Arbitration [illegible] the United States [illegible] [illegible] and anybody else [illegible]

Mr. MAGNUSON. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Vermont [illegible] Government [illegible] [illegible]

DISCRIMINATION BY FOREIGN [illegible] LANDLORDS TO SECRET STATE [illegible]

Mr. MORRISON. Mr. President, [illegible] morning newspapers [illegible] political secretary of the [illegible] covering the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]